Dear Sol, 8/4/92

This "Shrinking an Enlarged Prostate" article from today's Post's Health section may interest you, I anticipate that when I go to Hopkins on the 28th I'll be put on this new drug, Proscar. My earlier efforts did not succeed.

Quite some time ago, when I first heard of it and that testing was at Johns Hopkins, I asked the hematologist there, a man who is referred to by the interns and residents as "the guru," and who has been more than just helpful to me, to see if he could get me included in the testing program. He is the one who monitors my blood when I'm a patient there. In fact, when I was there for a cataract operation, I was his patient, not any opthalmalogist's, and I was not in the famous Wilmer Eye Institute but was wheeled there for the operation and subsequent examinations. He phoned the Dr. Walsh in the story to try to get me an appointment but Walsh was booked up for 3-4 months so I became the patient of one of his assistants, a fine man named Bressler. When I saw Bressler in May, before he left on vacation, he asked a member of his staff to again see if Walsh could get me on Proscar. The answer was no. So, I've been there twice since for the monthly injections of a similar but different and less effective drug, lupron, which is injected monthly (the shot alone costing $400.000!).

The article says that determining who would use Proscar is hard to determine but I think with me there is no such problem. This is because of the hazard to me of any surgery because of my clotting problem.

When I last saw Bressler and asked him about the locally-prescribed drug to help copy with my sleep apnea problem he exclaimed, "That could kill you!." He meant that one of the known side-effects could block the flow of urine and that would require an addition transurethal resection (TURP) and then any clot that resulted could kill me. So I think I'll be put on the Prosdr on the 28th.

And that will save me most of the monthly trips to Hopkins. I'll probably have to go there for checkups on how Proscar is working and for other purposes. But the timing is now important to me because I no longer have my transportation, Lil's younger sister, who is to have a heart catheterization next week and has been told not to drive out of town, has been my driver.

For men these new drugs are wonderful. It is probsble that the lupron has at least delayed my need for another TURP. I had clotting complications with the one I had in 1986. It may have prevented the need fof that additional TURP. But it did not result in the shrinkage referred to from Proscar on some cases. All men have their own means of knowing that.

Best,

My family doctor, local cardiologist and neurologist had all three prescribed what is contraindicated. We knew thanks to the out-of-date Physician's Desk Reference Frieda sent us. Lil copied off the data on the one that led to Bressler's exclamation, I showed it to the cardiologist, who had agreed with the neurologist who prescribed it, and he told me to take it up at Hopkins. Any of the three medicines could have caused an immediate need for another TURP!